

H. FOOD ALERTS AND COMPLAINTS:

1. FOOD ALERTS:

In spite of quality controls and inspections, products sometimes find their way into the market which cause or may be suspected to cause a possible or potential health hazard. This happens with foods, drugs, automobiles, appliances, etc. Unfortunately, this can occur with USDA Commodities.

When a food alert is called, the actions are not taken lightly. Full cooperation is necessary at all levels (Federal, State, and Local) to identify and hold suspected products. As soon as the Regional Office is notified of a food alert, designated FNS representatives contact each SDA and Child Nutrition Director. All available information is provided to the State Directors. The KDA has established a network of SFA contact persons using Designated Personnel for Food Alert/Disaster Feeding Form (See Sample) to assist us in notifying all SFAs of required action

to take.

When the food alert is over, the FNS Regional Office will contact the Food Distribution Director and the Child Nutrition Directors, in writing, and release the commodity and/or product.

2. Commodity Complaints

How to file a complaint about USDA Commodity Products:

Commodity Complaints should be reported to our office using the Electronic Commodity Complaint Form (KY-FD-21) which can be found on the Food Distribution web site under the NSL Program under Forms. This office will decide whether your complaint can be resolved at the state level, and if not, we will enter your complaint into the National ECOS Commodity Complaint System.

To assist this office in processing your complaint more quickly, provide the following information on the Electronic Commodity Complaint Form:

Commodity Title and Code

Description of the problem

Date your agency received the commodity

Quantity of product involved

Quantity and physical address of product remaining

Contract number (may be stenciled on the outer carton)

Delivery Order Number

Notice to Deliver Number

These numbers may be on the paperwork you received with the commodity shipment. If not, this office should be able to obtain them.

If you are requesting a replacement, you should retain the unopened product so that the vendor can exercise his right to examine or retrieve the product.

How to file a complaint about a USDA product that has a commercial label

Manufacturers that produce foods for USDA, which are distributed to schools and other outlets, have the option of using their own commercial label or they can use the traditional USDA labels. This means that you may receive USDA donated foods in a label that is the same as those which you have purchased commercially. For example, your USDA commodity green beans may come with a Del Monte label.

When a recipient has a complaint about a product that has a

commercial label, you have the option of contracting the company directly to request a resolution to your complaint. This may be the easiest option for you, particularly if you have purchased other foods from the manufacturer and already have a relationship established with the company.

However, you may choose to notify this office about the complaint and provide the information listed above.

Other tips that might help you resolve the commodity complaint more quickly.

When completing the Food Complaint Form (KY-FD-21), it would be helpful if you could provide the following information:

The name of the product and the USDA Commodity code (e.g., canned Beef – A502)

The nature of the problem and whether anyone reported feeling sick or being injured from consuming the product.

The extent of the problem (e.g., the number of cases, pounds, truckloads, etc.)

The specific circumstances involved (for example – I received the damaged canned products two months ago but the case they were packed in was located in the middle of a pallet that could not be seen until it was opened by the school or the temperature in the delivery truck was 40

degrees when the discolored frozen products were delivered.)

Street address of each location where the product is being stored.

Delivery order number; date product received, contract number, notice to deliver number, lot number and can codes (if applicable).

In some instances, digital photographs of damaged product may be helpful.

Even if you do not have all the information listed above, please complete the Complaint Form and e-mail to this office, so that it can be entered into the National ECOS Commodity Complaint System. Entering this information into ECOS gives us the ability to track the resolution of your complaint and also allows us to determine if similar complaints have occurred throughout the country.

If you need a commodity code for an USDA commodity when filing a complaint, this information is available via the ECOS Online Ordering System.